

Message Text

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20/67

ACTION CU-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 /016 W
----- 109402

R 021240Z OCT 75
FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4354
INFO USIA WASHDC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 BUDAPEST 3207

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDING SECTION INFORMATION)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL, HU, US

SUBJ: PROPOSAL FOR AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER IN BUDAPEST

1. AS BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN U.S. AND GOH IMPROVE, THIS EMBASSY BELIEVES IT IS NOW TIMELY FOR INTERESTED OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON TO CONSIDER DESIRABILITY OF OPENING AN AMERICAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE IN BUDAPEST.

2. AS ONE WOULD EXPECT, THE USSR MAINTAINS HUGE, OSTENTATIOUS CULTURAL INSTITUTE ON RAKOSI UT, MAJOR TRAFFIC ARTERY IN DOWNTOWN PEST, WHICH DOES NOT FAIL TO ATTRACT ATTENTION AND VISITS EACH DAY FROM HUNDREDS OF HUNGARIAN SHOPPERS PATRONIZING DEPARTMENT STORES AND OTHER MERCANTILE ESTABLISHMENTS IN THAT NEIGHBORHOOD. THIS EMBASSY DOES NOT REPEAT NOT RECOMMEND THAT U.S. ATTEMPT TO RIVAL MASSIVE SOVIET PROPAGANDA AND CULTURAL EFFORT HERE IN TERMS OF SIZE OR PUBLICITY OR SPENDING. HOWEVER, FRANCE AND ITALY MAINTAIN MODEST AND SUCCESSFUL CULTURAL INSTITUTES IN BUDAPEST; AND FRENCH INSTITUTE IS FLOURISHING TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT, ACCORDING TO FRENCH AMBASSADOR BRESSIER, PARIS HAS JUST APPROVED SIZEABLE (BUT UNSPECIFIED) OUTLAY TO MODERNIZE, RE-EQUIP AND EXPAND THEIR FACILITY (REF: BUDAPEST A-75, AUG 19, 1975). AUSTRIA, AFTER LENGTHY NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOH, HAS JUST SECURED SITE IN BUDA FOR CULTURAL INSTITUTE; VIENNA HAS SET ASIDE EQUIVALENT OF \$2.4 MILLION FOR

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CONSTRUCTION PURPOSES; AND GROUND-BREAKING WILL OCCUR

AS SOON AS TECHNICIANS OF TWO GOVERNMENTS HAVE AGREED ON ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING DETAILS.

3. USIS LIBRARY INSTALLATION ON BUDAPEST CHANCERY PREMISES IS BADLY LOCATED, CRAMPED AND UNINVITING. PAO USES HIS HOME FOR MOST CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND COMBINING THIS EFFORT WITH SOCIAL ENTERTAINING. USG NEEDS TO DO MUCH MORE; IT NEEDS IN 1975 AND WILL NEED IN FUTURE YEARS AN ADEQUATE, PROPERLY EQUIPPED AND STAFFED FACILITY TO DISCHARGE THE NORMAL USIS CULTURAL/INFORMATIONAL/ EXCHANGE FUNCTIONS. NOW IN 1975, BEFORE HELSINKI CSCE DECLARATION IS FORGOTTEN, IS RIGHT MOMENT TO TEST GOH WILLINGNESS TO APPROVE AND ASSIST WITH ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH AN AMERICAN FACILITY. MOREOVER, SINCE USG MUST SOON AGAIN ATTEMPT TO DISENTANGLE THE SNARL OF USG-OWNED PROPERTY IN BUDAPEST, NOW IS THE RIGHT MOMENT TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE AND DECIDE EN PRINCIPE AT LEAST ON EXTENT AND SCALE OF U.S. CULTURAL AND INFORMATIONAL EFFORT IN HUNGARY OVER THE MID-TERN FUTURE (THREE TO FIVE YEARS HENCE). A SIMILAR OPPORTUNITY IS UNLIKELY TO RECUR.

4. EMBASSY'S PROPOSAL FOR AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER IN BUDAPEST FOLLOWS:

A. ACTIVITIES

CENTER'S ACTIVITIES SHOULD INCLUDE EXTENSIVE LIBRARY PROGRAM WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON AMERICAN STUDIES COLLECTION, FILM AND VTR SHOWINGS FOR BOTH GENERAL PUBLIC AND SPECIAL TARGET GROUPS; LECTURES BY SPEAKERS OBTAINED THROUGH CU'S AMERICAN SPECIALIST PROGRAM, RPO VIENNA, AND USIA'S VOLUNTEER SPEAKER BUREAU; CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS INCLUDING CONCERTS OF AMERICAN MUSIC BY LOCAL ARTISTS; EXHIBITS; AND ENGLISH INSTRUCTION PROGRAM GEARED TO SPECIALIZED GROUPS SUCH AS SCIENTISTS, PHYSICIANS, SYSTEMS ANALYSTS, AND TEACHERS OF ENGLISH. CENTER COULD ALSO PROVIDE STUDENT COUNSELING SERVICES; ORIENTATION PROGRAM FOR HUNGARIANS GOING TO U.S. FOR STUDY, AND FOR AMERICANS ON RESEARCH PROGRAMS IN HUNGARY; ENGLISH-TESTING SERVICES FOR THOSE REQUIRING THAT SKILL AS PREREQUISITE FOR STUDY IN THE U.S. AMERICAN BOOKSTORE/RECORD SHOP AND SMALL SNACK BAR WOULD ALSO FORM PART OF CENTER OPERATIONS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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B. STAFF

MINIMUM STAFF OF TEN PEOPLE WOULD RUN THE CENTER. AMERICAN DIRECTOR WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CENTER UNDER SUPERVISION OF EMBASSY PAO. HUNGARIANS (OR WHERE APPROPRIATE RESIDENT AMERICANS HIRED LOCALLY) WOULD FILL OTHER POSITIONS:

1) PROGRAM DIRECTOR TO COORDINATE CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS;

- 2) ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO SUPERVISE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS INCLUDING PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT, BOOKEEPING, AND MAINTENANCE OF PHYSICAL PLANT;
- 3) PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIAN;
- 4) LIBRARY ASSISTANT/BOOKSTORE OPERATOR;
- 5) LANGUAGE INSTRUCTOR;
- 6) MEDIA EQUIPMENT TECHNICIAN;
- 7) SNACK BAR OPERATOR;
- 8) CLERK/TYPIST/RECEPTIONIST; AND
- 9) MAINTENANCE MAN.

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C. PHYSICAL PLANT

CULTURAL CENTER WHETHER BUILT FROM GROUND UP OR REMODELED FROM EXISTING BUILDING SHOULD REFLECT A BLEND OF AMERICAN AND HUNGARIAN CULTURES. MOVEOVER, BUDAPEST HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COUNCIL WILL PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE DETERMINING DESIGN OF BUILDING SINCE ITS APPROVAL OF ARCHITECTURAL PLANS IS NECESSARY BEFORE ACTUAL BUILDING OR REMODELING CAN TAKE PLACE.

TOTAL SPACE REQUIRED TO HOUSE A CENTER COMMENSURATE WITH THE LEVEL OF ACTIVITY POSSIBLE IN BUDAPEST IS APPROXIMATEY 10,320 SQ. FT. WITH FOLLOWING DIVISION OF SPACE:

(1) PROGRAM SPACE:

LIBRARY TO HOUSE 20,000 VOLUMES WITH A SEATING

CAPACITY OF 50, STORAGE AND WORK SPACE. 1500 SQ FT

THEATER WITH SEATING CAPACITY OF 150. 1100 SQ FT

THREE CLASSROOMS WITH SEATING CAPACITY OF 20. 1000 SQ FT

SMALL CONFERENCE ROOM WITH SEATING CAPACITY
OF 15. 250 SQ FT

VIDEO-TAPE/SEMINAR ROOM WITH SEATING
CAPACITY OF 50. 500 SQ FT

EXHIBIT AREA. 1500 SQ FT

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MUSIC ROOM WITH SEATING CAPACITY OF 6. 150 SQ FT

BOOKSTORE/RECORD SHOP. 400 SQ FT

PROGRAM EQUIPMENT STORAGE. 150 SQ FT

(2) ADMINISTRATIVE SPACE:
EIGHT OFFICES. 800 SQ FT

GENERAL STORAGE SPACE. 1000 SQ FT

WORKSHOP FOR MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS. 120 SQ FT

SNACK BAR WITH SEATING CAPACITY OF 30. 500 SQ FT

OTHER NON-PROGRAM SPACE SUCH AS REST ROOMS,
CORRIDORS, ETC. 1200 SQ FT

PHOTO-LAB. 150 SQ FT

D. ANNUAL BUDGET

(1) PROGRAM:
LIBRARY (ACQUISITION, LIBRARY SUPPLIES, ETC.) \$6,500

LANGUAGE PROGRAM. \$5,000

ORIENTATION PROGRAMS, LANGUAGE-TESTING
SERVICES. \$1,000

FILM/VTR PROGRAM (ACQUISITION, EQUIPMENT). \$10,000

CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS INCLUDING LECTURERS,
EXHIBITS, ETC. \$30,000

(2) ADMINISTRATION:
SALARIES. \$50,000

PHYSICAL PLANT, INCLUDING MAINTENANCE,
INSURANCE, UTILITIES, ETC. \$20,000

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPLIES. \$5,000
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TOTAL COST. \$127,500

5. ACTION REQUESTED: COMMENTS, THOUGHTS AND QUERIES
FROM THE DEPARTMENT AND OTHER INTERESTED WASHINGTON
AGENCIES ARE RESPECTFULLY REQUESTED.
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Message Attributes

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